

A sneak
peek into
an
introvert's
world

Real feelings, hidden details

Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

The purpose of these poems, letters, experiences, thoughts, and memories is to revisit the parts of myself that have not yet been heard or healed. Some of these aspects are beautiful, while others are messy and difficult. Nevertheless, they all contribute to who I am.

I may come across as irrational in some, if not many instances. It has been quite challenging for me to reveal that part of myself to you. I am taking the risk of being vulnerable by expressing my thoughts honestly, without sugarcoating my experiences.

I have not shared complete explicit details about the incidents. However, the feelings I expressed were genuine and sincere.

Poems

A Confused Misfit

A need to fit in a social setting

An urge to isolate from social setting

A need to create real and fulfilling connections

An urge to cut ties to avoid unhealthy attachment

A need to get exposed to the future beforehand

An urge to pause the time and stay still

A sadistic desire to do something self destructive

A voice begging to love myself unconditionally

An attempt to feel happy for others

An evil voice screaming and forbidding to do so

Who is right?

Some say, maturity is the key to adulthood

Some say, everyone is winging it

Some say, don't care about what society thinks

Some say, mind your words because you live in this society

Some say, don't take others' opinion to your heart

Some say, listen to others' opinion about you

Some say, develop a thick skin

Some say, own sensitivity as a badge of honor

Some say, parents are the most important

Some say, treat parents like humans, not God

To my younger selves

You looked the most adorable when you found yourself ugly

You had the most sensible traits when you found yourself stupid and misfit in the school

You were allowed to make mistakes when scolded and beaten up in the name of tough love

You were too young and delicate to handle emotional blackmails

You were allowed to not sing in front of your aunt

You deserved hugs, pats, smiles, encouragement when you were deprived of it as if they were meant to spoil you

You were beautiful even when you didn't get spectacles

You were strong when you refused to see crying as a weakness

You were smart enough to normalize crying and view it as a strength

No one deserved the warmth, kindness, compassion, care when failed to acknowledge them

Your secrets shared with people deserved to be kept safe

Your self awareness is one of your biggest strengths

You were allowed to be unapologetic and bold when you were apologetic for your boundaries and needs

You deserved to smile, laugh, be carefree when you were feeling miserable,

extremely cautious for being yourself to just fit in

You deserved safety and comfort when all you got were threats and forced discomfort

Why explain?

Why explain when you are constantly unheard?

Why explain when your feelings are dismissed?

Why explain when you are labelled “mad”?

Why explain when your issues are dismissed?

Why explain when at the end, you will always be blamed?

Why explain when you are labelled as “crybaby” each time you cry your heart out?

Why explain when all you will hear is “You are creating drama unnecessarily”?

Why explain when you have to beg for the bare minimum?

Why explain when you are raising your standards?

Why explain when something you do is none of their business?

Why explain when what you receive is guilt trip, victim card, manipulation?

Why explain to the one who constantly unnecessarily interferes and bothers you?

Why explain when threatening is seen as the last resort to get fruitful results?

Why?

Why is there a timeline existing for everything?

Why do people unknowingly hurt you?

Why do some friends invalidate your pain during the toughest phases of your lives?

Why do you question the integrity of your pain and struggles?

Why can't you extend kindness to yourself when you do it effectively for loved ones and strangers?

Why do you discount your struggles and pain while empathising with others?

Why do I contradict myself irrationally when I feel helpless?

Why do I feel less deserving of kindness from others and unable to count my kindness as a gift from me? A quality of mine?

Why do we criticize ourselves so much that we avoid looking in the mirror to see and admire a beautiful and strong person inside out?

Why can't we look at ourselves in a different light for a change?

Why do I need to carry my "honor" when in public?

Why does someone justify abuse?

Why does a dress hold a potential for someone to harass me?

Why do some people break your heart when it is not any of your fault?

Why is it so challenging to love myself from inside?

Why is it challenging to respect myself?

Why do I let people ruin and shake my confidence?

Why are my words misunderstood?

Why do I feel that someone can control me like a puppet?

Why am I blind to my capabilities and qualities?

Why is loneliness promoted in the disguise of “solitude” “self love” “you don’t need anyone” “don’t expect anything from others”?

Contradictory feelings

Self love is difficult! Not loving oneself is no less difficult!

Trusting people is so difficult! Trusting myself is not less difficult!

Finding kind people is difficult!

Seeing some kind strangers turning into indifferent strangers is complicated!

Finding hope is challenging! Losing hope is no less challenging!

For some, crying is tough! For some, to stop crying is tough!

For many, screaming naturally out of emotional pain is tough!

Why am I not safe on the roads when I am minding my own business?

Why am I blaming myself when the one to be blamed is guilt-free?

Why do I blame myself when deep down I know “It’s not my fault!”?

Is this person a friend?

Who belittles you

Who goes my way or the highway

Who dismisses you

Who manipulates you

Who plays the victim card to turn others' against you
Who doesn't know to appreciate anyone but themselves
Who doesn't know how to encourage you in a healthy way
Who is blind to their mistakes
Who doesn't know how to apologise
Who treats you like a tissue paper
Who lies to you constantly
Who can't keep your secrets safe
Who normalizes insulting disguised in jokes
Who labels you "oversensitive" to conveniently insult you
Who makes you doubt your own existence

Self love

Love yourself so much that others' ugly words spoken about you don't shake your core
Love yourself so much that you don't feed onto others' compliments to recognise your worth and qualities
Love yourself so much that you don't need to show others how successful you are to feel validated
Love yourself to be kind to yourself on your difficult days without questioning it
Love yourself enough to identify someone's toxic traits and draw boundaries

Love yourself enough to call out people for their toxicity

Love yourself enough to identify the battles worth fighting and winning.

Love yourself so much that you see others' opinion about you not as your reality

Love yourself so much that only YOU get to define yourself

People

Ever ready to advise than listen non judgmentally

Blinded by toxic favoritism

Shatter your confidence

Try to minimize you

Not receptive to listening and understanding

Uplift you, comfort you, loyal to you

Honest cheerleading

Wholehearted well wishers

Having your back

Teaching you to laugh at yourself

Teaching you what to not settle for

Backbit about you

Take a stand for you

Teach you things without shaming you

Disrespect, dismiss and ill treat you

Patient, gentle, respectful, caring

Making fun of your insecurities

My kind of people

The imperfect ones, unapologetically themselves

Ones who can comfort me, listen to me without judgement, respect me even when they disagree with me completely

Ones who can be vulnerable and real around me even when it is difficult for them

Ones who don't see disagreements as threats

Ones who find comfort in me

Ones who don't just come to me during their or my bad times to receive or give support

Ones who prioritize non judgmental listening over fixing

Ones who take accountability for their lives

Ones who challenge me gently

Ones who choose their battles in their lives

Ones who are a work-in-progress

Ones who know how to not take certain things in life seriously

Letter to my lost self

Letter to My Version of Myself, Whom I Lost by the End of March 2025

Hey! I know that many things have changed over the past four months. No matter how much you may deny it, there were certain aspects of your life that made you miserable, and you felt you had no choice but to endure them. So, what now? Those challenges have come to an end for good. The time spent with people you found toxic and unhealthy will no longer be a part of your daily life. You are returning to a safe space that suddenly feels unfamiliar. Isn't that true?

There were toxic individuals to contend with on a daily basis, and you disliked arriving at a nearly empty space.

Many aspects were strange and unpredictable.

There was a persistent fear of outcomes, missed opportunities, and self-doubt, accompanied by confusion and the anticipation of painful scenarios in every aspect of life.

The roller coaster of emotions and hormones was overwhelming when a close friend behaved erratically. Feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and anticipation disrupted your sense of peace. While you may not recall the situation in precise detail, you vividly remember the sudden shock that struck you to your core, leaving you with a profound sense of abandonment.

The manner in which she ended the friendship, stemming from

misunderstandings and her reluctance to confront you about them, profoundly affected you. You only learned of her decision to terminate the friendship after you put your own safety at risk by directly asking her about it. Although you did not delve into the specifics of her reasons for ending the friendship, you experienced a considerable sense of relief at finally escaping the uncertainty and anticipation. You felt relieved to distance yourself from someone who lacked the courage to address the issues directly and did not value the friendship enough to confront you about the misunderstandings. You had mixed feelings about the end of the friendship. You felt happy, angry, and relieved all at once. She often claimed and acted in ways that made you feel as though she had adopted you and considered you a true friend, deserving of difficult conversations whenever necessary.

She exuded the vibes of an older sister and referred to herself as your “mom”. The sudden loss of this shook you to your core and left you questioning that, “Now, who will be there for me? Only she was genuinely present among all the insincere ones, and now she has left.”

That’s when you needed to recognize and understand that you required a life beyond that environment. You must elevate yourself in a way that prevents you from attracting individuals like her.

You realized that the atmosphere was filled with toxic and insincere people from the start, and you managed the situation more effectively because you learned from your mistakes.

Do you remember the day you finally decided to reach out to a stranger in a support group for help? You sought comfort and a sense of belonging, realizing that it is okay to need others and that you are not a burden to anyone. What did you receive from the stranger? Constant reminders that you could handle everything on your own and that you inherently didn't need anyone, even during difficult times. It affected you so deeply that you left the support group with a message that indirectly conveyed how much her words hurt you, without revealing her identity.

Do you remember the day you broke down on a fundamental level and felt inconsolable? You sought support and comfort from the girls who were always in high spirits. What did they do? They tried to persuade you not to hold grudges against others because you have only one year left, and after that year, no one would remember you. Therefore, you should not dwell on the issues that caused you distress. You clearly expressed to her that her words made you cry more, which you found unacceptable. Unfortunately, you were unable to communicate your feelings in a respectful and calm manner. That was the day you strongly felt that the people around you were too lonely and were promoting loneliness, disguising it in the name of "self love" "you don't need anyone" "don't expect anything from anyone, or else you will be disappointed".

Do you still remember how your body reacted when your close friend withdrew from you, suddenly stopping both her communication and acknowledgment of your presence? Your body was instinctively seeking safety, responding to one of your core needs. You didn't share these feelings with anyone in depth because you were too exhausted to confront them. You had been anticipating something positive and were impatiently waiting for it. Your body practically cried out for safety but was unable to find it. Your body will not forget this experience.

Last but not least, you developed feelings for someone after nearly a year of being deprived of this emotion. Ultimately, this left you with many unanswered questions, a sense of unease manifested as shivers, and the realization that while people can be genuinely good, they may not be the right ones for you.

You had to make a decision based on the observed patterns. It was a difficult choice, but the correct one. Implementing it was equally challenging, yet ultimately rewarding.

You gained experience in taking an informed risk for the first time. Although you were uncertain about the outcome, you understood that something could go seriously wrong, and you had to keep that possibility in mind.

Making the difficult decision for your own benefit, without consulting anyone or fearing the disappointment of others, is a significant accomplishment.

Finally, I would like to say one thing to you. You have gone through a roller coaster ride in a holistic sense. Now, you are no longer within me. However, our core needs remain unchanged. Your carefree side, which you displayed with such ease, has become more complex. It will reveal itself to those who earn your respect and provide a safe space for you. This time, you will make better choices for your life and take greater control of your future. You understand that your vulnerable and carefree side is not for everyone; people must meet certain standards to witness it. Your existence is a silent act of rebellion. You will continue to be yourself and strive for personal growth. You do realize that your life does not revolve around just a few things. You can create your own comfort zone, safe space, and growth environment, and live accordingly. You will become more discerning and selective. You will prioritize yourself more than ever before. You will advocate for yourself more than you did in the past. This is what you have accomplished in 2024 after learning from your mistakes between 2019 and 2023. Isn't that right?

Emotions and experiences

Memorable Experiences and Emotions

Since childhood, I have never quite found my place in a friend group, whether during my school years or in college.

It hurt me deeply, and it still does. In my desire to fit in, I often pretended to be someone I was not. This façade was painful because it felt inauthentic.

Gradually, I realized that authenticity fosters genuine connections. Being true to myself always brings me peace and helps me identify those who are fake and superficial. However, this realization did not simplify my journey. Finding people with whom I could truly connect proved to be quite challenging.

Temporarily, I formed friendships with certain individuals who supported me during specific periods of my life. I cherish those relationships, even though they are no longer actively involved in my life.

When anyone hurt me, I allowed it to happen because, as a child, I did not understand the concept of boundaries. I would notice the hurt, cry about it, and blame myself, yet I still kept those people in my life. Gradually, I began to confront them, albeit in an immature manner, but ultimately, I did nothing to change the situation. I did not respect myself enough to remove them from my personal life. I believed I deserved their treatment and thought they could leave only if they chose to, not me.

Things changed when I experienced friendship breakups from the age of 13, and I was conveniently labeled when I was difficult to deal with. The favorite label was “oversensitive”. There was one person who used to believe in “my way or the highway”.

She identified my insecurities and lack of self-confidence and used them against me by belittling me in terms of everything ever possible. She was being my “secret keeper” “the one to show me my reality”. I ignored almost everything and had to pay a price for it. When I confronted her about the same with the confidence I had, she conveniently labelled me as “over sensitive”. She claimed that I should be able to take jokes, when in reality, those were insults disguised as humor. I was being insulted by her, while others laughed at those insults.

She turned everyone against me when I confronted her, leaving me alone to deal with the situation. Unfortunately, I returned to her and ultimately paid a heavy price for it. When I discovered that she had been speaking ill of me to those I despised, I ended our friendship for good. It was not easy, but for the sake of my sanity, I had to do it.

Since that day, I removed the term “Best friend” from my dictionary, and it has become even more difficult to trust people.

I have lost a version of myself and I wish that this doesn't happen to anyone

ever.

The ones whose actions, words and intentions keep contradicting each other are never going to be a part of my inner circle.

That's when I felt like I was coming back home.

I met a person who was very friendly, energetic, humorous, polite, authentic, and caring. It was difficult for me not to be his friend. Each time I saw him, I felt a comfort which was unexplainable in words. I felt comfortable showing my real self around him. Despite our differences in opinions, he never invalidated the pain and experiences I shared with him. His way of uplifting me to move ahead in life and embrace failing as a normal part of life was comforting and soothing. His aura of making one feel comfortable in their own skin was relieving. He was not perfect. On some days, when he used to be tired and sad, it used to reflect in his voice and body language. He used to crack self-deprecating jokes to deal with it. I didn't like it. However, I realized that it is human to do so.

As an Indian woman, there is almost always a pressure to look a certain way. Your curves, body shape, face structure, nails, style, hair and a lot of things need to be in a specific way to please society.

Some people fat-shame you and some skinny shame you. I was fat shamed by some in the form of jokes. The subtle comments by the ones close to me- "She gained weight. Or else, she is very beautiful." "Lose weight and you will look

more attractive.” and some other derogatory words chosen for the women who were “fat” in their opinion just because they didn’t like them as a person.

Those comments were not told to me. But some days, when he used to be tired and

I was heavily influenced. “What if one day, they say it to me?” “What if one day, someone whom I adore, says it to me?” “What if one day, someone insults me in public with these words, how will I be able to deal with it?” “Am I really ugly because I am not in a certain shape?” “Is my physical beauty dependent on my weight?” which slowly turned into “I look ugly” “Don’t click pictures with me. They will be ruined because of me”, “I don’t want to look at myself”, “My thighs are ugly”, “My arms are ugly”, “My face is ugly”. Unfortunately, I was heavily influenced by celebrities who used to keep their bodies in shape and the comments they used to receive from the public about their body shape.

I used to seek validation from everybody I met. I never believed in those who used to say, “Beauty is inside out”, “Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder”, “Judging someone based on their looks is quite shallow”, “You are beautiful”, “You are adorable”.

I wanted to lose weight just so that when I saw a certain number on the weighing scale, I could tell myself that, “Now, I am looking beautiful”. It was not that I wanted to be a rebel and be overweight for the sake of it. I was asked to lose weight for my menstrual health, which was a valid reason. But I never realized that the process of losing weight for menstrual health turned into a

journey of self-loathing.

It took me 21 years to finally believe in the fact that “I am beautiful and I need nobody’s confirmation about this”. I do feel ugly on the days when I lose a lot of hope in my life. But during those moments too, I know that just because of a loss of hope, these feelings are emerging, and the fact doesn’t change that I am beautiful.

There are many women out there who are suffering from PCOD. Hence, losing weight for them is way too challenging. I wonder how they would be dealing with comments on their bodies. Some might be hiding their feelings of hurt, some might ignore, some might give back a fitting reply to those comments.

A painful question

Is being a woman and being myself in India a curse?

I have always wondered how women in India manage to survive despite the numerous restrictions placed upon them.

Patriarchy, internalized misogyny, mansplaining, “strong”, “multitasker”, “superior”, “honor of the house”, “creator”, “giving”, “perfect”, “mature”, “dominating”, “submissive”, “too much”, “too less”, “selfish”, “endurance”, “sacrificing” and many such terms continue to circulate in my mind.

I have realized that no woman is ever deemed sufficient in anyone's opinion. She is expected to shoulder emotional responsibilities and make sacrifices. In nearly every profession, she is perceived as inferior to men.

Currently, I feel that some issues I face as a woman include menstrual pain being dismissed, often encouraging me to be active rather than rest on those days, as well as concerns about my safety.

I am expected to dress in a certain manner to avoid provoking men, even on days when I do not feel inclined to dress that way.

I have been advised not to walk on the road at night due to safety concerns.

There is a risk of being assaulted after dark. I am not allowed to laugh at certain jokes, particularly in the presence of men.

But wait. Why only at night? Why am I expected to restrict the types of jokes I

choose to laugh at?

I was approached and spoken to in an unsolicited manner by a man in the afternoon at a public place that is typically considered safe while I was minding my own business. My clothing was not revealing.

I am pressured to work hard and secure a job; otherwise, I might end up with a husband who would abuse me, leaving me feeling helpless. Why would I ever choose such a person to be a part of my life? Why should I strive to find employment solely to avoid this fate?

Why should I be mindful of my words when communicating with others? Why can't I express my opinions freely while still being respectful?

Why should I strive to maintain personal relationships with individuals who make me feel completely unsafe?

Why am I expected to be entirely accountable to others and society when my personal life and choices are none of their concern?

Unsent letters

Unsent Letters to Those Who Hurt Me

To the one who shook me

Hey! When I first spoke to you, I never imagined that I would be inviting chaos and confusion into my life. But wait, I don't blame you, nor do I blame myself for gradually developing feelings for you. It was both biological and a subconscious choice. I realistically anticipated that something could go wrong and that my heart could be broken as well. The only thing I didn't know for certain was how it would happen. You were the first person for whom I took a risk, approaching you each time with hope and anticipation, albeit cautiously. I promised myself that while doing this, I wouldn't sacrifice my self-respect. I believe I have fulfilled that promise to some extent. In some ways, I am disappointed in myself; in other ways, I am not.

I don't regret having liked you. Partially because of you, I gained this experience in my life, even though it was not entirely pleasant. However, it taught me many valuable lessons. It caused me to lose a version of myself due to the decision I had to make.

I want to express that I do not harbor any hatred towards you. You may very well be a good person; I simply did not have enough time or opportunities to identify it.

However, I am certain of one thing: you were never going to be a safe person for me. I am truly grateful that I made the decision to step back and refrain from nurturing any further hopes for something more.

I was constantly on an emotional roller coaster. I do not believe in forgetting incidents that shake me to my core. After some years, I may not recall the event with the same intensity or detail as I do now. However, the body keeps score; it remembers how it felt and continues to seek safety. I consider this an inherent gift, as my body instinctively recognizes who may be unsafe for me, even after only a few interactions with a person.

I hope to never encounter you in my future.

To the one who abandoned me

Do you remember the first time we met? I was sitting alone, crying due to someone's hurtful comment. A mutual friend noticed me and encouraged your group to come over and check on me. At that moment, you were a stranger, yet you offered me so much comfort. I truly remember and cherish that kindness.

I didn't actively choose to spend time with you or even engage in a brief conversation. It wasn't because you weren't wonderful; rather, I struggle with trusting people. Nevertheless, each time you saw me feeling down, you approached me and provided your support.

You often advised me to take care of myself in ways that I didn't resonate with.

I would get angry, feeling that my boundaries were being violated. But guess

what? That was your love language. It was simply conveying “I care for you. So, I am asking you to take care of yourself in the ways I believe are right for you.”

You used to call me out whenever you sensed that I was being unfair, without worrying about whether I would be upset with you and possibly not speak to you for a long time. However, you believed I deserved to know when I made a mistake and had the potential to hurt someone. You scolded me when I expressed my feelings of inferiority in front of you. It served as a reminder that I am not inferior to the person I mentioned and never will be. That was wonderful—just you being you. However, one day, everything changed abruptly, and you abandoned me. Why didn’t you find it important to have a difficult conversation with me about our misunderstanding? Why didn’t you come to express your feelings candidly? Why did you choose not to respond to my expression of feelings, the situation, and the context? I deserved difficult conversation, as well as responses and acknowledgment of my feelings.

At the end, when you decided to end the friendship due to a misunderstanding, why didn’t you communicate that to me? It was your decision, true, but I needed to be informed. You left me in suspense until I asked you directly, which felt unfair. Perhaps, once again, it was simply you being yourself!

The only difference between these two times lies in how I felt about the situation.

You once told me, “Don’t expect. Raise your standards. Just don’t allow people to mistreat you.” Guess what? We both didn’t realize, or at least I didn’t, that I would have to apply that advice to you.

Do you even realize how painful it was for me to endure all of this? I had to witness a drastic transformation, from you “adopting” me to abandoning me without even confronting me! I wanted to lash out at you, but instead, I directed my frustration at our mutual friend, who was not even involved. You used a third party to communicate and resolve issues between us. What kind of logic is that? I admit I was also going along with the same flow. I was wrong as well in all of this. I wanted our misunderstanding to be resolved while respecting your need for space. I was not in the right headspace, and neither were you. We both were wrong. What matters is that, initially, when I realistically expected you to confront me and have a difficult conversation, you didn’t. I was in a state of shock. However, I continued to wait for you to approach me and discuss it. I wish I could have lashed out at you on the day you told me, “It’s over.” But a significant part of me craved peace as well. My body was practically begging for tranquility.

Do you know that you were the last person from whom I expected such erratic behavior? Did it further shake my belief in meeting genuine and healthy people who are right for me? Yes, it did. I had doubts before I met you, and my experience with you only exacerbated them.

But here is the catch: I now realize that I must be even more selective in this unpredictable world.

Is it going to be tiring? Yes. Is it going to be worth it? Eventually, yes. I am angry with you and harbor feelings of resentment. However, I also want to express my gratitude for helping me realize that I need to raise my standards. The people who communicate with me openly, without fear of conflict, are truly meant to be cherished.

I didn't deserve the pain you caused me. What happened was beyond my control. However, your decision to end our friendship has positively impacted my health and sanity. Since the moment you explicitly communicated the breakup, I have not experienced any tremors when I see you. My heart aches and longs for the person you used to be—the one who cared for me in the past. It misses the times we spent together when I felt healthy and safe.

I will never approach you because I value my body and mind far more than anything else in the world. If that makes me seem selfish in your eyes, I am unconcerned.

I am glad you revealed your true colors through this misunderstanding.

Ideally, I would prefer for this not to have happened, but it did. That's life. I will

be cautious around individuals who resemble you and will not allow myself to become close to them as I did with you. Unlike how I used to wish for others who hurt me- "They should apologize to me. They should feel the exact hurt I felt. They should re-evaluate their behaviour with the right mind."

I know that wishing for this will only cause me more pain and prevent me from healing my wounds. My body deserves peace, and wishing for this would only disrupt that. The only difference between my past and present is that I am now able to take action on this realization. In the past, people would tell me that wishing for things like this would be futile.

I am not a saint! I have not fully embraced that path. At this moment, I harbor no ill will toward you.

However, I hope to never encounter you again in my life.

Thank you for being my friend and providing me with a safe space until your behavior became erratic!

Thank you for revealing your true colors! It's never too late, is it?

Thank you for reading!

Thank you for embracing the raw and imperfect aspects of who I am!

You have witnessed my past self. Throughout the process of writing this book, I realized how many emotions needed to be expressed in words for my former self and how much I needed to convey my feelings to those present in my reflections. I understand that I cannot and should not share these sentiments with them.

This platform allowed me to share everything honestly without revealing their identities.

You may have disagreed with my beliefs and opinions, which are not necessarily related to the feelings I experienced.

I understand that.